

1971

# Unemployed 'Samaritan' Tends To Needs of Inmates in Brooklyn

By RALPH BLUMENTHAL

The radio that blares soul music to the inmates working in the steamy kitchen of the Men's House of Detention in Brooklyn is Joseph Dunay's.

Inmates mop their brows with handkerchiefs provided by Joseph Dunay. They play cards with decks given by Joseph Dunay. Sunday newspapers come from him as do Christmas cards, envelopes and stamps.

Who is Joseph Dunay? "He's a godsend," says Patrolman Ed Patterson who works in the Brooklyn jail, at 275 Atlantic Avenue. "He's the best man there ever is going," says an inmate named Bill who works in the kitchen.

"Good Samaritan Joseph Dunay," was the way one letter writer in Chicago addressed an envelope to him. "Surely one of God's ambassadors," was what a priest called him in another letter.

## Assisting Servicemen

Ever since World War II, when he entertained and guided visiting servicemen, sometimes at his own expense, Mr. Dunay, a 56-year-old unemployed weaver, has dedicated his life to helping other people.

Besides buying and distributing small necessities and luxuries about twice a week to the inmates at the Brooklyn jail—he has a pass from the City Correction Department granting him access to any city jail—he likes to stop out-of-towners on the street to show them around what he calls "my city."

"I'm a humanitarian at heart," he said in an interview. "I have great compassion for people less fortunate than myself."

Now Mr. Dunay, a bachelor, is finding it more difficult to come up with his own money. On Oct. 18 he left his \$100 a week job as a weaver because

he was having trouble with his eyes and since then, not having applied for unemployment compensation, he is without an income and waiting for a possible job in the Correction Department.

## Lives by Himself

In the meantime he lives frugally in a \$90-a-month apartment at 65 Rockaway Parkway in the Brownsville section of Brooklyn. He has lived alone since his mother died two years ago. He has four brothers who sometimes help him financially.

While he might easily be taken for an Irishman, his name is French and he is Jewish.

The thank yous, it is clear, is all that he is looking for.

And the thank yous came, cascading around him one day last week as he took a visitor along on his usual rounds inside the jail.

"On the gate!" Mr. Dunay shouted just like a professional guard when he needed an officer to open a gate to the cellblocks.

## Distributing Cards

In the kitchen, he balanced two \$1 boxes of assorted Christmas cards he had bought on a serving dish. And, shouting, "You want Christmas cards?" he handed the cards out to the T-shirted men who gathered around.

"Should be a couple more like you, Joe," said one inmate.

Mr. Dunay recently brought in his radio for the inmates working in the kitchen. The warden, James Monroe, only found out about it afterward and was distressed.

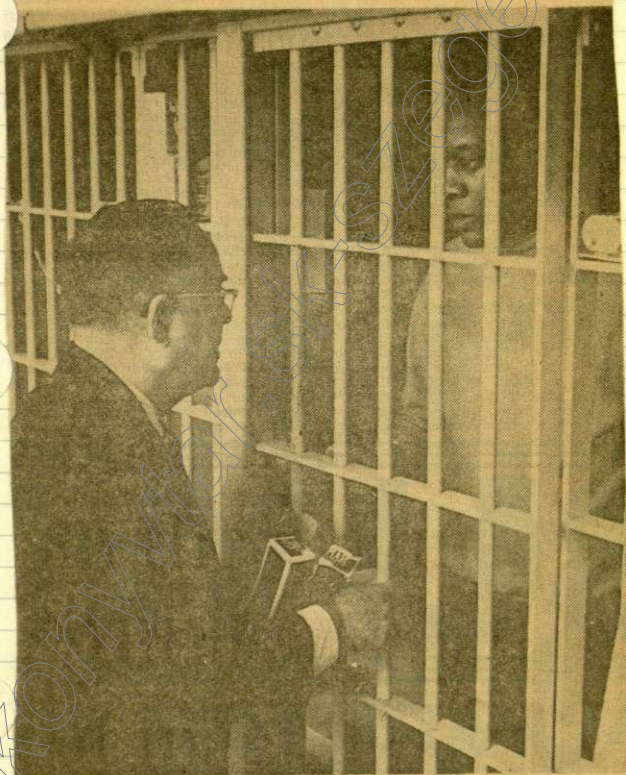
"If I knew, I wouldn't have let you do it, Joe," he said.

"I'm only one person, warden," Mr. Dunay replied. "This radio can be enjoyed by 50 or 60 persons."



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The New York Times/Jack Manning's  
Joseph Dunay distributing gifts to inmate in Men's House of Detention in Brooklyn